



HUNTER HERITAGE BILL

Michigan ranks last in recruitment and retention of hunters. It's time to fix that.

Michigan is a state with a rich outdoor tradition. Today, nearly two million sportsmen and women take to Michigan's woods and waters each year with friends and family to hunt, fish, trap and enjoy everything that Pure Michigan has to offer. In doing so, these sportsmen and women make up a significant portion of Michigan's tourism economy, spending roughly \$3.4 billion directly in the state each year, which has an economic ripple effect to the tune of \$5.9 billion annually for the state and local economies. This spending also generates about \$406 million in federal taxes and \$378 million in state and local taxes each year. These sportsmen and women also pay for the lion's share of conservation in our state through license fees and federal excise taxes on sporting equipment.

Sadly, however, Michigan ranks last in the nation when it comes to the recruitment and retention of hunters. For every 100 hunters who leave the field, only 26 take their place, placing Michigan 43 percent below the national recruitment and retention average of 69 percent. For this reason, MUCC members in 2010 passed a resolution to advocate for the elimination of Michigan's minimum youth hunting age, which is considered a major barrier to bringing youth into the sport of hunting.

MUCC members believe that parents, not the government, should be able to decide when their kids are mature enough to hunt under a specially designed mentored youth hunting program. Such a program would not only improve Michigan's last-in-the-nation hunter recruitment and retention rate, but also foster wholesome family-focused recreation. Additionally, the program would allow interested youth hunters to "give hunting a try" before the rigors of adolescence and extra-curricular activities fill up their schedules.

HUNTER HERITAGE BILL PROMOTES SAFETY, ETHICS AND PRESERVES MICHIGAN'S OUTDOORS HERITAGE

The Hunter Heritage Bill will allow the Natural Resources Commission to design and implement a Mentored Youth Hunting Safety Program with the input of hunting safety experts and other stakeholder groups, including Michigan's Hunter Safety Program instructors. In this sense, the Hunter Heritage Bill would improve safe hunting practices and ethics in young people.

WHAT THE HUNTER HERITAGE BILL -- DOES

The Hunter Heritage Bill enables the Michigan Natural Resources Commission to create a Mentored Youth Hunting Safety Program for individuals under the age of 17

- Mentors must be 21 years of age, possess valid

QUICK HITS

- **The Hunter Heritage Bill (to be introduced by Sen. Joe Hune, based on SB 1589 of 2010).**
- **The Hunter Heritage Bill would establish a mentored youth hunting program allowing parents to determine at which age their kids are ready to hunt.**
- **The Hunter Heritage Bill does NOT negatively impact Hunter Safety nor does it degrade existing requirements.**
- **Michigan is lagging far behind other states in efforts to improve our hunter recruitment/retention rate – which is last in the nation.**

hunting license and proof of previous hunting experience/ completion of training in a hunter safety course

- The NRC will establish specific parameters for how a youth may participate in the program with an experienced mentor
- The bill DOES NOT eliminate Hunter's Safety - it merely gives parents and mentors a chance to teach youngsters about hunting safety and ethics by establishing a program for minor youth to hunt with a mentor. Once a youth reaches age 17, he or she will still have to complete hunter safety to obtain a license.

PARENTS -- NOT THE GOVERNMENT -- SHOULD DECIDE WHEN THEIR KIDS ARE READY TO HUNT

Facts about Hunter decline and recruitment/retention nationwide:

- A new study by the Youth Hunting Report indicates that state laws and regulations that restrict youth hunters hamper recruitment efforts
- This research shows that 80% of hunters indicated their first hunting experience occurred when they were young
- The study also found that more restrictions = less youth hunters
- The study also found that adults are leaving the sport also as some parents choose to forgo hunting, rather than leave their child who is under the state's minimum hunting age out of the hunting experience
- Hunting has lower injury rates per 100 participants than most other common youth activities such as football, basketball, running/jogging, soccer, baseball and gymnastics.
- The Youth Hunting Report, which was peer reviewed for statistical validity by Trial Research, shows that youth hunters are the safest hunters in the woods

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when accompanied by an adult mentor

- Incident rates for hunting are 10 percent higher in the 19 states where a minimum age is set - most likely because youth who learn hunting safety when they are young carry safe habits throughout their adult lives
- States that allow parents to decide when their kids are ready to hunt have better safety records than states with restrictions.

THE PENNSYLVANIA MODEL

- Pennsylvania's Mentored Youth Hunting Safety Program was authorized by Gov. Ed Rendell when he signed HB 1690 into law on Dec. 22, 2005. The bill was part of the "Families Afield" campaign
- The law authorized the Pennsylvania Game Commission to implement the program, which officially began on July 22, 2006
- In 2006, the first year of the program, 43,780 youth were mentored by 32,913 adults
- In 2007, the number of mentored youth grew to 58,883 - there were 51,141 adult mentors
- It's working! Pennsylvania saw a 21,437 spike in general hunting licenses from 2008-2009.

LAGGING BEHIND: WHERE MICHIGAN RANKS

- In 2006, Ohio passed legislation establishing an apprentice hunting license that allows youth to hunt with family members - Ohio does not have a minimum youth hunting age
- In 2005, Minnesota passed legislation allowing youth under 12 to hunt wild turkey with their parents
- Pennsylvania has run a successful mentored youth hunting program since 2006 - Michigan's "Hunter Heritage" bill is modeled after Pennsylvania's law
- Indiana, Illinois and Iowa do not have a minimum hunting age - all three are in the top 14 states for hunter recruitment and retention

- 31 states do not have a minimum hunting age - Michigan is only one of 19 states that actually have a minimum hunting age

IMPROVING HUNTER RECRUITMENT IS GOOD FOR MICHIGAN'S ECONOMY

- The 31 states that do not require a minimum hunting age have a 20 percent higher hunter recruitment rate than states with an age minimum
- The top three states in hunter recruitment and retention have age limits that are lower than Michigan's or have no age limits at all
- 20 states permit a mentor to introduce hunting to a youth before the youth hunter must complete a hunter education course. Those states' recruitment statistics are 25% higher than states with a minimum hunting age

IT'S ABOUT MORE THAN GETTING KIDS AFIELD

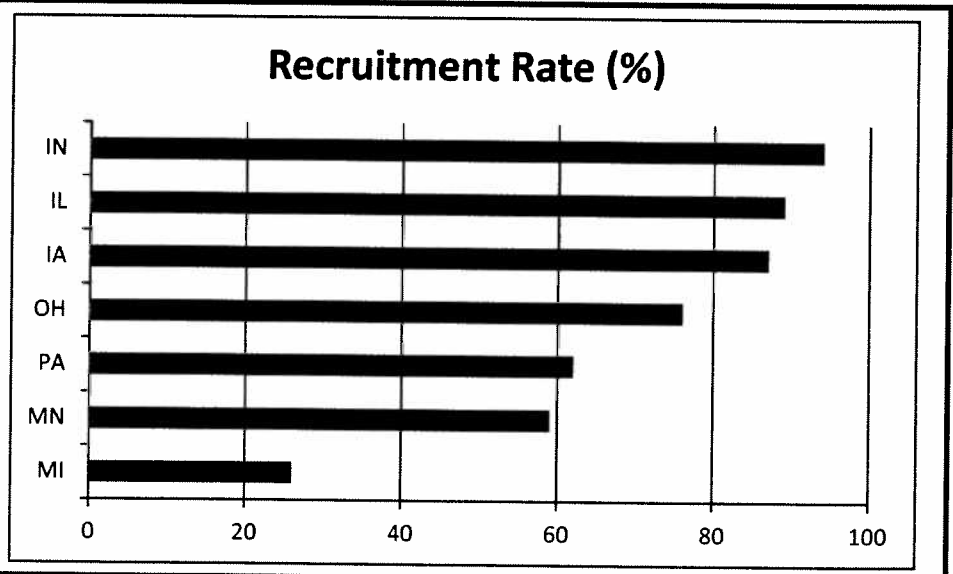
- The Hunter Heritage bill will positively affect non-hunters also, as hunting is big business in Michigan.
- Each year, sportsmen spend \$3.4 billion in Michigan, which has an additional \$5.9 billion economic ripple effect on the state's economy.
- This supports roughly 46,000 jobs, \$1.7 billion in salaries, and \$378 million in state and local tax revenue.
- Michigan hunters also pay for wildlife conservation through license fees, which go toward improving wildlife habitat, wildlife management, recreational access, and conservation officers
- Michigan also receives about \$24.5 million each year from federal excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment, which go towards funding game and fish conservation in the state
- With a 17% reduction in hunters over 10 years, the entire state has an interest in keeping our hunting heritage - and spending - alive and well

MICHIGAN IS DEAD LAST!

When it comes to recruiting/retaining hunters, Michigan is last in the nation.

For every 100 hunters that leave the sport in Michigan, just 26 replace them.

Consider the recruitment rates of a few other states.



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